NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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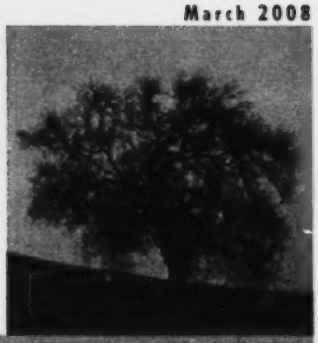
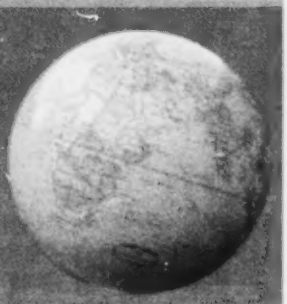
March 2008

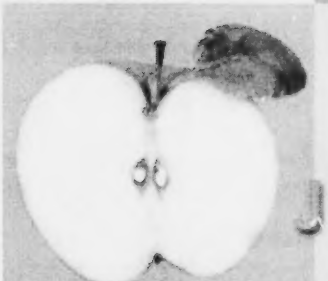


EDUCATION WEEK MARCH 2-8, 2008

LEARN...
J'APPRENDS

RESPECT...
JE RESPECTE...





GROW...
JE M'ÉPANOUIS...

LA SEMAINE D'ÉDUCATION • DU 2 AU 8 MARS, 2008

Up Front from the President

The month of March holds two significant events for education in this province. The first is Education Week where we celebrate education and all the good things happening in our schools. "Learn... Respect...Grow/J'apprends...Je respecte...Je m'épanouis" – simple but profound words in education and in life. The preparation, heart and soul teaching and ongoing work that teachers do in order that they instill these understandings and beliefs in students, belies the simplicity apparent in those few words. This powerful message forms the theme for this year's Education Week but is fundamental to teaching, as we strive to motivate and enable our students to learn, to interact positively with others and to move toward independence socially, academically and personally.

The NLTA has sponsored Education Week since 1936, and what we strove for during the thirties and into the present day is very much in the same vein and realm. It has always been teachers who have chosen the theme of Education Week and it has been teachers who have given importance to the whole task of celebrating learning. But as we are all aware, the responsibility inherent in teaching and learning is hardly a week-long enterprise.

The second event in March that is important for education in this province is the Provincial Budget. Earlier this year we had the opportunity to present a brief during the pre-budget consultations. Our paper outlined some vital areas within education that need Government's fiscal attention. We focused on the learning and working conditions in our province's classrooms, particularly in the areas of teacher allocations, ISSP/Pathways, discretionary leave and the substitute teacher budget, teacher salaries, supervision of students, and professional development for teachers.

We urged Government to provide the financial and human resources to ensure the recommendations from the ISSP/Pathways Commission Report can be implemented thoroughly and expeditiously. We also urged Government to respond positively to the recommendations of the Teacher Allocation Commission by allocating the necessary fiscal resources to action them. There exists a critical need to change the way in which teaching units are allocated in this province. The time has arrived when we must take a different approach and begin the teacher allocation process where it is most effective and important; that is, in determining and addressing the needs of each individual child enrolled in the system. That requires two separate teacher allocations – one for specialist units and one for classroom teachers.

Our pre-budget submission urged Government to review the funding levels of substitute teacher budgets for discretionary leave requests and provide a substantial increase in the financial commitment to this area. There is a resounding cry from the membership that there is a serious under funding of the substitute teacher budget for discretionary leave. The reductions imposed in previous budgets should be lifted, those monies reinstated, and additional funds allocated for substitute teacher days to meet the present demands of the system.

We urged Government to commit to teacher salaries that are competitive with the rest of the country to not only attract individuals into the profession, but to retain them in this province. If we are going to be successful in persuading individuals to not only enter the teaching profession, but also to remain in this province, we must substantially improve the salary scales and benefits of teachers in order to remain competitive with the rest of Canada and with the larger job market in particular. While the details of the upcoming contract will be worked out in the collective bargaining arena, Government needs to make plans to address teacher salaries in its budget process for 2008-09.

Funding and resources to allow districts to hire non-teaching personnel to carry out non-instructional supervision of students was also an important piece in our pre-budget submission. Over the past year, the NLTA has engaged in discussions with the Department of Education and the School Boards Association on this issue and the Department has agreed to establish a Joint Working Group to explore a more sensible solution to the supervision responsibility. It is our hope that a thorough exploration of the matter and possible alternatives will lead to action that will ease this burden on teachers. Depending on the outcome of the Working Group's deliberations, we foresee the possibility of real progress in this key workload area.

What it means to be a teacher in 2008 is significantly different from what it was years ago. Those who retire now have seen tremendous change as well as overwhelming demands placed upon them. The beginning teachers of 2008 are entering a much different profession than their predecessors. In our pre-budget submission therefore, we have also urged Government to provide significantly improved financing in the area of authentic teacher professional development; this is teacher directed and selected professional development and growth.

We will vigorously pursue improvements to your working conditions at the Negotiations Table. Enjoy "Education Week" in your school communities, and thank you for all the dedication and determination that you consistently bring to your classrooms and for the special things you and your colleagues accomplish with your students each and every day.

Sean

THE
bulletin

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8TH ANNUAL PROVINCIAL FAIR

TEACHER RECRUITMENT

TWO LOCATIONS – MAY 13, CORNER BROOK & MAY 15, ST. JOHN'S

Date: Tuesday, May 13, 2008
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Place: **Food Court**
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
Corner Brook

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2008
2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Atrium of the Inco Innovation Centre
Memorial University
St. John's

Information booths will be set up by:
- **Department of Education**
- **Faculty of Education**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association**
- **School Districts and other Educational Partners**

The Provincial Recruitment Fair is organized in partnership with:
- **Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador;**
- **Memorial University;**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association;**
- **Newfoundland and Labrador School Districts**

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY

Queen of Peace in the Land of Oz

"We're off to see the Wizard, the wonderful Wizard of Oz!" sang all 72 children on stage at Queen of Peace Middle School in Happy Valley-Goose Bay during their grand finale of the 1939 classic. "The show was outstanding," said Sandra Quigley, a Core French teacher at Queen of Peace Middle School. One parent stated, "That's the most fun I've had in a long, long time."

The production of the Royal Shakespeare Company Version of this play represented four months of intense preparation. "We started auditions on September 12 with 160 students trying out for the various parts. It took a solid week just to get through the auditions," commented Kathleen Hicks, who together with John Hicks and Philomena Abbass directed the play. "In the end it came together even much better than we had hoped. The kids were fantastic! And just to think that these actors were only ten to twelve years old!"

The play showcased the dramatic talents of Angela MacKinnon (Dorothy), Lucas Patey (Scarecrow), Bradley Baker (Tin Man), Noah Taite (Cowardly Lion), Haley Battcock (Wicked Witch of the West) and Allison MacDougall (Good Witch of the North) to mention just the main characters. There were a multitude of parts and most actors played two roles. The organizers multi-tasked as well. Dorrie Brown, acting coach, also accompanied on piano throughout the musical. Angele Yetman who coached the young actors as they learned their parts, orchestrated the backstage traffic through all three performances. John Hicks helped transform the school gym into a theater and directed all the technical aspects of the play. "That was perhaps the biggest challenge," stated Kathleen, "not having a theater in which to practice our play. We had to improvise so much with the set, and could not practice with the sound and lights beforehand because we did not have a proper theater to work in."

"But the show did go on – a happy fact that can be attributed to the hard work of many individuals," said Ms. Quigley. "An undertaking such as this is inclusive by its nature." All students who wanted to participate had a chance to do something special. Students played the parts but they also sang in the chorus, designed the sets and backdrops, worked backstage, operated the lights, monitored the sound and helped with costumes and make-up. To promote the play, students designed the t-shirts and provided artwork for promotional posters and clipart for the program. It was a huge success in terms of entertainment, in terms of learning and in terms of community spirit.

The Wizard of Oz was great "because, because, because..." because of the wonderful work that was done.

Wizard of Oz student performers (l-r): Bradley Baker, Noah Taite, Angela MacKinnon, Lucas Patey. ***Photo credit: Janice White***

PARADISE

Winter Alphabet

Students and teachers at Holy Family Elementary School in Paradise have reason to celebrate. Just last year, Mrs. Power's Grade 1 class created a book called *Winter Alphabet* to enter in the Kids Are Authors Contest with Scholastic Canada. A few months later they received the good news – they placed one of nine finalists from 202 entries from across Canada!

To celebrate their success the Grade 1 students turned the mock copy into a book, making them published authors and illustrators!

"Winter Alphabet is appropriate for this time of the year," says Tina Costello, Learning Resource/Grade 5 Teacher at Holy Family Elementary. "With its lively, pastel images and descriptive rhymes depicting a child's wintry world, this book is an A through Z treasure."

The book sells for $10.00, plus shipping, and can be ordered by calling Holy Family School at 709-781-1440. A book launch was scheduled for February 15.

One of the many descriptive pages from "Winter Alphabet", created by Mrs. Power's Grade 1 class at Holy Family Elementary in Paradise.

Family Literacy Day

Tricentia Academy in Arnold's Cove celebrated "Family Literacy Day" on January 30. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 gathered together in the gym with their parents, grandparents and guardians to enjoy some of their favorite books and to read to one another for an hour.

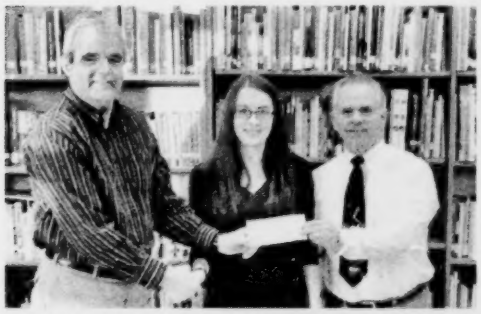
"Blankets, pillows and comfy pajamas made the reading event that much more enjoyable," said Elizabeth Power, a teacher at Tricentia Academy. "Afterwards, students were treated to a tasty, healthy snack. The school was pleased by the turnout, with over 60 visitors participating in the event.

Brooklyn, Cody and Jason Hollett enjoy a story read by their Nan, Ivy Hollett, during Family Literacy Day at Tricentia Academy.

BOTWOOD

Exploits Valley Branch scholarship winner announced

Katherine Cooke of Botwood has been awarded the 2006-07 Exploits Valley NLTA Branch Scholarship. This annual $500 scholarship is awarded to the Level III student with the highest overall academic average in the branch. The recipient must be a son or daughter of an Exploits Valley NLTA member. The award money is collected (voluntarily) from teachers in the branch. Katherine is the daughter of Frank Cooke, a teacher at Botwood Collegiate.



l-r: Ford Butler, Chairperson, Scholarship Selection Committee; Scholarship winner Katherine Cooke; and Rick Duffy, President, Exploits Valley Branch

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA Appointment Notice

Manuel Ball

The Provincial Executive Council of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is pleased to announce the appointment of Manuel Ball to the position of Coordinator – Health and Wellness Promotion Program.

Manuel has worked for 12 years as Health and Physical Education Specialist in the public education system in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island. He has worked as a Health and Physical Education Teacher in Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan, and was a Teaching/Research Assistant and Substitute Teacher in New Brunswick. He also worked as a Research Coordinator with the Prince Edward Island Health Research Institute (PEIHRI). In this position he was involved in a number of research projects dealing mainly with student health issues. Manuel has completed courses in Human Biology, Exercise Physiology, Exercise Psychology, Health Education, and Research Methodology and Statistics.

Manuel holds a Bachelor of Physical Education from Acadia University and a Master of Science – Kinesiology from the University of New Brunswick. He is originally from Newfoundland and Labrador and is delighted to be returning to his home province.

In his new position Manuel will develop a health and wellness promotion program to be piloted in schools throughout the province.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2008 Christmas card contest winners announced

Cassidy Fudge, a Grade 4 student at Green Bay South Academy in Roberts Arm has been chosen as winner of the 2008 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. Cassidy receives a $100 cash award and a framed copy of her winning entry. Her winning design will appear on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2008. The theme for the 2008 contest was *What Christmas Means To Me*, and this year the contest was open to all Grade 4 students in the province.

The second place cash prize of $50 was awarded to Brigid Martin, a Grade 4 student at St. Peter's Elementary in Mount Pearl, and a third place cash prize of $25 was awarded to Grade 4 student Zachary Marshall of St. George's Elementary in Conception Bay South.

Entries are judged on the basis of their creativity, colour and ability to reproduce well.

Cassidy's winning design for the 2008 NLTA Christmas Card Contest.

Operation Christmas Child a huge success

Thank you, Newfoundland and Labrador – you did it again! In 2007, NL residents packed 30,097 shoe box gifts filled with toys, school supplies and hygiene items for Operation Christmas Child. These were part of a national effort that saw 661,530 shoe box gifts collected across Canada for needy children around the world.

This winter, children in Senegal, Haiti and the Ivory Coast will receive shoe box gifts packed by the caring people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The national 2007 total was about 10 percent less than the 738,079 donated in 2006, largely because the box donation deadline was set earlier than in previous years to allow more time for processing. Greg Johnson, director of Operation Christmas Child Canada, said this turned out to be inconvenient for many potential shoe box donors, so his organization will give Canadians more time to pack boxes and will work to streamline processing in the 2008 campaign.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief and development organization. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and hand-delivered more than 54 million shoe box gifts to children in 125 countries around the world affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, disease, and famine. Canada is among 11 countries that donate and distribute shoe boxes to bring a message of love, hope and joy to needy children.

Involvement in Operation Christmas Child has also been an exciting and rewarding experience for thousands of volunteers across Canada. Samaritan's Purse is already looking for volunteers to champion the 2008 Operation Christmas Child program in their home communities, workplaces, and churches. For more information, please visit www.samaritanspurse.ca/occ/volunteer/.

OTTAWA

Forum des enseignantes et des enseignants sur la démocratie parlementaire canadienne

Du 2 au 7 novembre 2008, sur la colline du Parlement, observez de l'intérieur le système parlementaire canadien. Rencontrez des parlementaires et des spécialistes de la politique, de la procédure et de l'enseignement. Analysez des aspects clés de la démocratie parlementaire. Élaborerez des ressources didactiques sur le Parlement, la gouvernance, la démocratie et la citoyenneté. La date d'échéance est le 30 avril. (www.parl.gc.ca/profs)

Le Parlement du Canada est heureux de proposer aux enseignants une vaste collection de ressources et de programmes. Ces ressources sont conçues pour aider les élèves à comprendre la structure et le fonctionnement du Parlement et elles sont adaptées à tous les niveaux scolaires. Plusieurs sont accessibles en ligne et comprennent du matériel à télécharger. Pour plus de détails, consultez le portail Éducation du site Web parlementaire : www.parl.gc.ca/education

CANADA

Nominations sought for Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History

Canada's National History Society is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the 13th Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. History and Social Studies educators are urged to submit their unique teaching approaches to the program.

Six recipients will be awarded $2,500, a medal and a trip for two to attend the Awards festivities and official ceremony with Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada. Schools also share in the winnings with an additional $1,000 being awarded to the recipient's school.

All approaches are welcome. Canada is rich in stories and there are countless ways to tell them. Elementary, middle and senior teachers are welcome to share their approaches. Teachers can present their work individually, as a group, or be nominated by a student, parent or colleague.

Deadline for submissions is April 25, 2008. Here's how to apply: Rules: www.historysociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=rul; Form: www.historysociety.ca/gga/asp?subsection=nom; Information: prixggawards@historysociety.ca; Tel: 1-800-861-1008.

Funny You Should Ask

I am a Kindergarten teacher. Although I have taught students from grades K-6 during my career, Kindergarten proves to be the most interesting and certainly entertaining!

This past September, on his VERY FIRST day of school, one of my Kindergarten students had a very interesting question for me. When my students entered the classroom, I showed them to the story circle where they each have a chair with their names on them. I showed them where to put their book bags, etc. While I was helping everyone to settle in, one little boy was itching to ask me a question. I asked him what his question was. I thought it might be a routine question like, "When is snack time?" or "When is it time to go home?" But no, this little five-year-old Kindergarten student asked, "Teacher, how many days before I'm a pipe fitter?"

Submitted by Pauline Osborne
St. Peter's Elementary, Upper Island Cove

Symposium 2008:

Post-Confederation Educational Reform: From Rhetoric to Reality

May 7-9, 2008 Inco Innovation Centre, Memorial University

Hosted by

Memorial University Faculty of Education in affiliation with the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development

Announcing Symposium 2008

The Faculty of Education, Memorial University in partnership with the Memorial University Harris Centre, announces a symposium intended to explore the condition of education in Newfoundland and Labrador in the post-reform era.

Symposium 2008 will provide an opportunity for educators, administrators, policy professionals, academics and graduate students to hear presentations and panel discussions and to exchange ideas in the areas of history, structural and curricular reform, the new accountability movement, education and social change, and education and social/economic development.

Conference Opening Wednesday, May 7, 2008 Memorial Presents Lecture

Dr. Phillip Warren
Dr. Phil Warren is a former school principal, university professor, policy researcher and Minister of Education. Named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2002, Dr. Warren continues his scholarly pursuits and is currently researching and writing the story of the reform of Newfoundland's denominational education system.

Keynote Speakers

Dr. Ben Levin, Professor and Canada Research Chair in the Department of Theory and Policy Studies at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto.

Dr. Charles Ungerleider, Director – Research and Knowledge Mobilization, Canadian Council on Learning.

Who Should Attend?

Teachers, educational administrators, professors and academic staff, post-secondary instructors, graduate students, Department of Education professional staff, policy professionals and other interested stakeholders.

Registration Fee: $225 + HST
Student Registration: $150 + HST

(Fee Includes Program, Symposium Luncheon and Evening Banquet and Breaks, Thursday, May 8th)

Register Online at:

Early bird registration up to Monday, March 31st. After that $275 + HST

www.mun.ca/educ/symposium2008/

Visa, Mastercard, American Express or Cheque
(made payable to Memorial University Conference Office) accepted

Symposium Partners

The Harris Centre, Memorial University
Department of Education,
Government of Newfoundland Labrador
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
Chartwells Limited

Delegates are responsible for arranging their own accommodations – Book Early

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

GAIL SCOTT (NÉE KETTLE)

Gail Scott

Teachers live forever in the hearts they touch. To read the comments posted on a web page is a testament to such a statement. Gail will certainly be remembered for her kindness, patience and love of teaching.

Gail was born in Port aux Basques on July 23, 1966. She graduated from St. James Regional High and went to Memorial University from which she graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in French and English and a Bachelor of Education degree. She continued her studies and in 2000 she earned a certificate of Educational Technology from McGill University.

In 2007 Gail obtained her Master's Degree in Information and Communication Technology from the University of Aberdeen.

In 1990 Gail began her teaching career with a replacement position at Holy Cross All Grade School in Daniel's Harbour. In September of that year she moved to Ramea and taught at St. Boniface All Grade School until 1999. It was there that she met her husband, Gary, and they were married in 1995. From 1999 to 2001 Gail taught at St. Peter's Academy in Benoit's Cove. She transferred to G.C. Rowe in Corner Brook in September of 2001 and remained in that position until November 2007.

Gail's love of teaching French as a second language was second to none. She was dedicated to the career she chose and the students who entered her classroom. Words of encouragement and praise were so often heard as she inspired the students to speak French and do their personal best. Patience was one of Gail's virtues and she always smiled no matter how trying a class may have been.

Gail's love of French extended beyond the classroom and she organized several excursions to Quebec and St. Pierre for her students. So many good times were had and those memories are cherished by those who were a part of the trips. Gail was very active at school; she was a member of the School Council, teacher sponsor of the Student Council and the Breakfast Club. Professionally, Gail took part in professional development programs for French and Technology and shared her innovative ideas and successes with her colleagues.

In November 2007 Gail went on sick leave to receive medical treatment and unfortunately, she didn't have the opportunity to return to her family, friends, colleagues and students.

Gail is survived by her husband, Gary, parents, Marjorie and Raymond, her twin sister, Glenda and many relatives, friends and colleagues. Her beautiful smile and kind-hearted nature are terribly missed, but will never be forgotten.

(*Submitted by close friend and colleague Cathy Payne.*)

In Memoriam
Submission Guidelines

Submissions to In Memoriam should be a **maximum of 250 to 300 words** and may contain a photo of the deceased. In Memoriams should be submitted within a timely manner – normally within the same school year (if possible) of the death of the teacher. Information may be included on where the deceased lived and taught, their education, accomplishments, community involvement and family information.

It is preferred that all submissions be e-mailed to Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor of *The Bulletin*, at labrowne@nlta.nl.ca. If submitting by mail, please address to: Editor, *The Bulletin*, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1. Submissions may also be faxed to 726-4302 or toll-free at 1-877-711-6582. Please be sure to include a contact name, school or business name, mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Sherburne Graham McCurdy, 1924 - 2007

In Memory of an NLTA Past President

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of Dr. Sherburne McCurdy on November 4, 2007. Dr. McCurdy came to Newfoundland from Nova Scotia in 1950 to become Principal of Prince of Wales College. He remained in this position until 1962. He held an M.A. from Dalhousie University and a PhD from the University of Alberta. He was President of the St. John's Centre Branch of the NTA from 1955-57 and was President of the NTA from 1957-59. He was President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation from 1961-62 and a Director of the Canadian Education Association (CEA) from 1961-62. He was appointed Supervisor of Instruction for the St. John's United Church School Board in 1964 and held this position until 1967 when he was appointed as Professional Secretary (Executive Director) of the NTA. In 1971 he left his position with the NTA to take up a position as President of Alberta College, a community college in Edmonton, Alberta. He held this position until 1984 when a massive stroke forced his early retirement. He was also a Fellow of the Canadian College of Teachers, a member of the Canadian Commission on the Community College from 1968-70 and in 1971 he was given Honorary Membership in the NTA.

The April 1971 issue of *The NTA Bulletin* carried a news item on Dr. McCurdy when he was leaving his position as Professional Secretary. It summed up the work carried out on behalf of teachers and education in the province. "In conjunction with his work as chief administrator for the Association, Dr. McCurdy was deeply involved in professional development and was solely responsible for initiating the Annual Summer Short Course in Curriculum which over the last four years has brought to this province some of the eminent scholars in that field. Under the aegis of his leadership, curriculum projects of a diversified nature have been initiated and concluded at the Branch level in many areas of the Province."

Prior to his stroke, Dr. McCurdy initiated the "Tri-Bach Festival," an international music festival in Edmonton celebrating the 300th anniversary of Johann Sebastian Bach. He was honored for his work on that project by being presented with the keys to the City of Edmonton as well as Honourary Doctorates from the University of Alberta and St. Stephen's College. Following his stroke, one of his main interests was volunteering with stroke victims at various rehabilitation hospitals.

In May 1971 Dr. McCurdy wrote a Guest Editorial for *The NTA Bulletin*. He stated " ... also to indicate how central a position our Association has moved into, not only in terms of the professional development and professional and economic welfare of our members but also in the general educational life of this province. That this is so should be a matter of great satisfaction for all our members. It should also constitute a challenge to all – Executive, staff, and general membership – not to relax their efforts on behalf of the profession but rather to seek out opportunities to strengthen the NTA so that it may even better serve the individual and collective interests of teachers and help to elevate educational standards throughout the province." Dr. McCurdy was instrumental in this goal and he was totally committed to education in this province and beyond.

Dr. McCurdy was involved in the total commitment at the church, university and political levels. When he felt it was time to withdraw he stated his reasons as being, "lest Athens should twice sin against philosophy."

Dr. McCurdy leaves to mourn his wife of nearly 64 years, Betty, and children Margaret, Earle, Bruce, and Jan as well as nine grandchildren and a wide circle of other relatives, friends and colleagues.

Financing a Year of Deferred Salary Leave

by STEFANIE TUFF

The Deferred Salary Leave Plan (DSLP) is available to any tenured teacher in a permanent position covered by the NLTA Collective Agreement. The terms of reference and other details of the DSLP are set out in Article 51 of the provincial contract (Article 57 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement). Many teachers find the DSLP an excellent means of financing a year of leave to pursue travel, family time, other employment, further studies, or any interest that an individual might have. Leave under the DSLP is fully credited for purposes of pension, seniority, severance pay, salary increments, and sick leave. The plan is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which does not allow the year of leave to be taken as the last year before retirement. The deadline to apply for enrolment in the DSLP (beginning in September) is April 30 of the previous school year.

While the DSLP provides an excellent opportunity for personal and professional rejuvenation, there are economic realities which must be faced. The Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division are often asked what the "difference is" in take-home pay while on deferred salary. We are reluctant to provide specific financial advice to members because each individual's situation is different and all financial matters, such as salary levels and income tax rates, are subject to change. Accordingly, the information provided herein contains rough estimates only.

The following comparisons of net salary for a teacher on full salary versus the various DSLP options are rough calculations for illustrative purposes only. Each individual teacher's situation will be different. The estimates are based on the salaries in effect as of September 2007. Taxes deducted vary for each teacher and they are approximations only, based on information provided by Teacher Payroll. EI and CPP deductions are based on 2008 formulae. Teachers participating in the DSLP continue to pay pension premiums based on the full, unreduced salary. EI premiums are paid on the full salary, but are not paid during the year of leave. Therefore, teachers may not be eligible for EI benefits in the year following the year of deferred salary leave, which may have implications for those wishing to take maternity leave in the year following a deferred salary leave.

Any further questions on the Deferred Salary Leave Plan should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Full Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	55,151	63,879	72,265
Estimated Tax	10,800	13,631	16,485
Estimated EI	711	711	711
Estimated CPP	2,050	2,050	2,050
NLTA Fees	689	798	903
Pension Deduction	5,157	5,973	6,757
Estimated Net*	**35,744**	**40,716**	**45,359**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

2/3 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	36,767	42,586	48,176
Estimated Tax	4,773	6,124	7,729
Estimated EI	711	711	711
Estimated CPP	1,647	1,935	2,050
NLTA Fees	460	532	602
Pension Deduction	5,157	5,973	6,757
Estimated Net*	**24,019**	**27,311**	**30,327**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

3/4 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	41,363	47,909	54,199
Estimated Tax	6,026	7,915	9,889
Estimated EI	711	711	711
Estimated CPP	1,874	2,050	2,050
NLTA Fees	517	599	677
Pension Deduction	5,157	5,973	6,757
Estimated Net*	**27,078**	**30,661**	**34,115**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

4/5 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	44,121	51,103	57,812
Estimated Tax	6,863	9,060	11,183
Estimated EI	711	711	711
Estimated CPP	2,011	2,050	2,050
NLTA Fees	552	639	723
Pension Deduction	5,157	5,973	6,757
Estimated Net*	**28,827**	**32,670**	**36,388**

** Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.*

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Certificates of Conduct
Didn't I Already Get One, and Why Do I Need It Anyway?!

by STEFANIE TUFF

Recently, there have been increased calls to the NLTA regarding school district requirements for teachers to submit current Certificates of Conduct issued by either the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary (RNC) or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). This is certainly not a new thing; however, changes to policy in some districts may be at the root of the growing interest in this issue. The purpose of this article is to provide information and guidance regarding the requirement for teachers to provide Certificates of Conduct as well as the necessary steps and associated costs for obtaining them.

As employers who place people in positions in which they work closely with children, school districts have a duty to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the teachers, student assistants, bus drivers, etc, they hire have the proper training, capabilities and character to carry out their assigned duties competently and safely. In this day and age, this includes taking precautions to ascertain, to the extent possible, that individuals in their employ do not have a history of inappropriate conduct toward children. Requiring a Certificate of Conduct is a normal part of this due diligence for school districts, as well as other organizations that have employees and/or volunteers working with children or other potentially vulnerable clients (for example, elderly and disabled persons).

A Certificate of Conduct issued by either the RNC or the RCMP indicates whether or not the person named in the Certificate has a record of criminal conviction as of the date the Certificate was prepared. An application must be completed and submitted at your local RNC or RCMP detachment office, and there is a charge of $20.00. This fee is waived for those who need a Certificate in order to serve as a volunteer; however, such applicants must also submit written confirmation of their volunteer status and the requirement for a Certificate of Conduct from the organization with which they intend to volunteer. One original Certificate is issued per application and applicants must pick this up in person, with one exception – the RNC mails Certificates requested for volunteer service directly to the organization in question. Teachers who have recently obtained a Certificate in relation to volunteer work should check with districts to which they are applying for employment to see if a copy of this would be acceptable, thus avoiding the application fee. Both the RCMP and RNC advise that, while Certificates are normally available within a week, delays are sometimes experienced during high volume times and teachers should not wait until the last minute to apply.

"Recent incidents involving teachers and other school district employees have attracted community and media attention, and school districts need to ensure they are meeting their obligations toward students without placing unreasonable demands on current and prospective employees."

School district policies regarding when Certificates of Conduct are required are fairly similar across the province (and the country), but are not identical. Teachers should always check the requirements for their district before submitting applications for employment, transfer, etc. This issue is addressed on district websites and on-line application forms, and any questions should be directed to human resources staff at your school district office. For example, according to the Eastern School District website, a Certificate that is less than six months old will be accepted.

Generally speaking, districts require updated Certificates for non-permanent employees who work on a mainly call-in basis, such as substitute teachers, more often than for permanent staff. The main reason for this is the lower level and frequency of contact the employer has with such employees compared to those holding permanent contracts. For example, substitute teachers may work in any number of different schools in different communities on a regular basis. They do not have a regular schedule and may go for significant periods of time having no contact with the employer. Advice from NLTA legal counsel indicates that a yearly Certificate update is not an unreasonable requirement in these circumstances.

In contacting school districts to prepare this article, some indicated that their policies regarding documentation required from employees, including Certificates of Conduct, are currently under review. Recent incidents involving teachers and other school district employees have attracted community and media attention, and school districts need to ensure they are meeting their obligations toward students without placing unreasonable demands on current and prospective employees.

Any NLTA members seeking further advice or information on this issue should contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Teacher Salaries A Cross-Canada Comparison

The following is a comparison of teacher salaries at the highest pay category in teacher salary scales across Canada as of September 1, 2007. The figures are the most current available and were provided to the NLTA by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. A more detailed comparison of major teacher salary scales in Canada is regularly carried out by CTF and is published in its *Economic and Member Services Bulletin* (November 2007).

Salary information contained below is based on province-wide salary scales for the four Atlantic provinces, Quebec and Saskatchewan, while Territorial agreements are shown for the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. For the remaining four provinces, Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, local collective agreements are in effect and a sample of salary scales from some of the largest urban centres is included.

Province/ Territory	Collective Agreement	Salary Category	Minimum ($)	Maximum ($)	Steps	Avg. Increment Min. to Max.	
						($)	(%)
NL	Provincial	VII	$54,324	$72,265	10	$1,993	3.2%
PE	Provincial	CVI	$48,783	$69,795	10[1]	$2,335	4.1%
NS	Provincial	TC8[2]	$55,644	$79,341	11[3]	$2,370	3.6%
NB	Provincial	CVI	$46,050	$70,858	11	$2,481	4.4%
QC[4]	Provincial	19 yrs.	$44,372	$67,242	11	$2,287	4.2%
ON[5]	***Elementary:***						
	Ottawa-Carleton[6]	A4	$48,443	$82,933	11	$3,449	5.5%
	Toronto	A4	$48,545	$82,985	11	$3,444	5.5%
	Secondary:						
	Ottawa-Carleton	A4	$48,523	$82,933	11	$3,441	5.5%
	Elementary-Secondary:						
	London Catholic	A4	$45,416	$83,480	11	$3,806	6.3%
MB	Winnipeg	7	$53,123	$80,837	10	$3,079	4.8%
SK	Provincial	VI	$48,550	$75,210	11	$2,666	4.5%
AB	Calgary Public*	F	$52,863	$80,582	11	$2,772	4.3%
	Edmonton Public*	6	$53,149	$80,729	11	$2,758	4.3%
BC	Vancouver	6	$49,292	$73,961	11	$2,467	4.1%
YT	Territorial	VI	$61,262	$88,004	11	$2,674	3.7%
NT	G.N.W.T.[7]	6	$66,664	$98,078	12	$2,856	3.6%
NU	Territorial	6	$64,767	$92,544	12	$2,525	3.3%

*Contract expired. Salaries shown are those in effect at the end of an agreement that expired prior to September 1, 2007.

[1] Effective September 1, 2007, Step 2 was eliminated. Scale includes steps 3 through 12, resulting in a 10-step scale.

[2] The highest pay category requires a doctoral degree.

[3] Effective August 1, 2007, Step 1 will be eliminated. This deletion will not result in teachers automatically moving one additional increment step on the salary scale. Eventually, this deletion will result in a 10-step salary scale.

[4] As of September 1, 2005, a single salary structure came into effect and the minimum salary for teachers with 19 years of schooling and no experience represented Step 7 of the 17-step scale, for a total of 11 steps.

[5] Up to an additional 0.5% shall be applied provided a number of conditions are met per Letters of Understanding: "Economic Reopener". Final outcome not known until Fall 2007, with release of CPI figures.

[6] Effective September 1, 2007, one salary scale will apply to *all teachers* on staff and results in an 11-step salary grid.

[7] Applies to teachers outside Yellowknife. Teachers in the Yellowknife Public and Catholic School Districts each have separate salary scales.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does a teacher have a day of sick leave deducted from his/her sick leave bank when he/she provides a sick note?

A. All periods of sick leave are deducted from a teacher's bank of days, whether a sick note is provided or not. The only exception to this is when school is closed pursuant to Section 32 of the Schools Act, 1997 – weather, failure of the sewage or other causes of a similar nature, etc. In this case the teacher does not lose the sick day, but a substitute called in to replace that teacher will be paid for the day that school was closed.

The purpose of a sick note is to demonstrate to the employer the fact that one's use of sick leave was for valid reason. Article 15.04 of the Collective Agreement states:

Sick leave with pay in excess of four (4) consecutive teaching days at any time or seven (7) teaching days in the aggregate in any school year shall not be awarded to a teacher unless a medical certificate satisfactory to the School Board has been submitted in respect thereof. In any case where the School Board is satisfied that it is not possible for the teacher concerned to secure a medical certificate, a certificate of a registered nurse, the Chairperson of the School Board, a magistrate or any other person designated by the School Board may be accepted in place of a medical certificate.

Therefore, anytime a teacher is absent for more than four consecutive days, a medical certificate satisfactory to the Board must be submitted. Likewise, once one has used more than seven teaching days within any school year, a similar note is required. While it is not necessary to provide a note for each individual day of absence, it is advisable to provide medical documentation for each sick leave period, if one has ready access to such documentation. However, as stated above, all days of sick leave, except those related to school closing under Section 32 of the Schools Act, are deducted from one's bank of sick days.

Teachers can find out how many days sick leave they have in their sick leave bank by requesting this information from the person at their school who is responsible for entering absences on the payroll system. This information is now available at the school.

This information has been prepared by Lloyd Hobbs. For information on this topic or other areas of Benefits and Economic Services, please contact any of the following: Lloyd Hobbs, ext. 230, Don Ash, ext. 231, Perry Downey, ext. 226 or Stefanie Tuff, ext. 232.

Disappointment is an ACTION Word!

by CLAUDETTE COOMBS

Disappointment is a natural part of life. We all know that and we may experience varying degrees of disappointments daily. The daily and lifetime range can be as transient as: having rain on a picnic day; to learning that we won't get that new position, classroom or resource that we wanted; as challenging as a change in health status; or as devastating as the loss of someone we love. Each new disappointment brings with it some reflection on past situations, some leftover emotion and maybe some new resentment and sadness. Despite this, we need to realize that it also brings new opportunities. If we focus on the loss that the disappointment represents, we continue to lose. We cannot change history yet we, irrationally and somewhat subconsciously, focus our energy on doing just that. We become fixated on "why?" and "what if...?". For the things that impact us most, we spend daytime, meal time and sleep time replaying scenarios, reliving the conversations and emotions, and possibly, retelling the story to whoever will listen. This focus only serves to bring us further down the dreary road of disappointment to darker destinations. Most times we come to a point where we say: "Enough of this! I have to change something!"

A colleague uses the motto: "Build a bridge and get over it". Yes, that's easy to say – but it's also an easy and useful quote to remember. It is definitely much more challenging to incorporate it into our daily thought and behaviour patterns. However, the practice and eventual habit of moving beyond a disappointment to new possibilities is well worth the work it takes to get there. Let's think about that. What are our options?

Analyze and Understand the Situation

1. Change the past? No, by now we have explored that one enough to know that it can't be done. We can't take back the words or undo the actions of ourselves or others.

2. Reinterpret the past? This might help us feel a little better but still doesn't take away the reality of the disappointing situation. Maybe the thief did need our money more than we did, but that doesn't help us buy our groceries or pay our bills now.

3. Refocus the present? Taking our mind off the situation may give us some reprieve, but the disappointment will eventually find a way back into our thoughts. Taking a break does provide some mental relief and allows us the opportunity to consider another perspective, but escape only works until we have nowhere else to run, or we can't get to sleep!

"Whether we call it a lesson or not, we can learn a lot from past disappointments. We learn about people, situations and most of all, we learn about ourselves."

4. Plan for a different future? This option is essential if we intend to move beyond the disappointment in a healthy way. Life happens. Things go wrong. We aren't perfect. Now that we have those truths out in the open, what's next? Look for the hints that let us know that there are some things over which we have some control. Ignoring the disappointment or blaming it on others takes away our ability to do anything differently next time. We may, or may not, have been able to avoid the situation but, if nothing else, we always have the opportunity to adjust our response to it.

Develop an Action Plan

Action is necessary. Passively waiting for time to heal our wounds, leaves the end result outside the realm of our influence. That's not where we want it to be! The proposed action may take considerable energy, mental effort and consistent determination. How do we maintain that drive when it would be simpler and easier to just quit? The motivation is in the end prod-

uct. Imagine the new, more positive, desirable result. When you mentally compare your negative present to the positive potential, the new image will always win. Don't be side-tracked into reflecting on the "good old days" or that time before the disappointment or loss. We have already established that we can't change history. We cannot bring back that moment. We only have the power to move through the present into a future in which we direct our attitudes and actions. If we are successful, over time we will have created a new past that we can reflect on with satisfaction.

If the situation could have been prevented by us, clarify how. What might have helped: better communication skills? improved time management? self protection strategies? additional resources? involving other people? You decide. It is time to identify something over which we have some control or influence. The next step is planning for a future which is different from our past, or even different from our present experience. What do we want instead of this? Plan "A" , or even the backup Plan "B", might not be enough to carry you through some situations. Be prepared to look for a Plan "C" or whatever it takes to recover from a serious disappointment.

If the situation could not have been prevented or avoided by us, could the personal impact have been minimized? How? Look realistically at relationships, the environment, personal skills and resources to determine where to find the supports we need. Cultivate those supports now, so we are in a better position to adequately deal with emotional challenges in the future.

Stay Committed

Although we need to know intellectually what is needed, a critical component of moving forward and taking responsibility for protecting our well-being, is our attitude. Two people can experience the same type of disappointment and the same level of loss in their lives, yet one is able to recover and find new pleasures, joy and purpose while the other is not. While one creatively explores alternatives, the other focuses on what is missing. This alone is enough to predict who will make a mentally healthy recovery. Adopting a positive approach automatically excludes the negativity inherent in disappointment. Since we are unable to concurrently hold the two opposing energies within our minds or bodies, we can use this fact of nature, to our advantage. Also, since our behaviours follow our thoughts, we must be sure to have our thoughts clearly focused on the success we want to experience, not on the perceived failures of the past.

We may, or may not believe that things happen for a purpose. That dilemma is tangential to the fact that "things happen"! Now that they have, we choose what we are going to do about them. Becoming solution-focused encourages us to assume a constructive attitude rather than succumb to negativity and pessimism. Whether we call it a lesson or not, we can learn a lot from past disappointments. We learn about people, situations and most of all, we learn about ourselves. As teachers, we like to take advantage of all "teachable moments". Let's not waste our own!

Remember that bridge? Let's visit the lumber yard – we may be in need of another supply.

Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

Employee Assistance Program

Counselling Services

Are you teaching in a rural community? Do you feel that you need someone to speak with but think that counselling is too far away?

- Counselling Services are available throughout all of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Telephone, computer and video conferencing can be confidentially and effectively utilizd to assist you.

If you wish to enquire further, please contact one of your EAP Coordinators:

Marie Wall, 1-800-563-3599, ext. 265, mwall@nlta.nl.ca

Claudette Coombs, 1-800-563-3599, ext. 242, ccoombs@nlta.nl.ca

Employee Assistance Program for teachers

Cyberconduct and Electronic Communications

Important Information and Advice for Teachers

by STEFANIE TUFF

Information and communication technology (ICT) is a regular part of every day life for most people. Text messaging, e-mail, web-surfing, chat rooms, Internet dating and Facebook, to name just a few examples, have changed the way we receive and convey information, both personally and professionally. While advances in ICT have, in many ways, made the sharing of information faster and more efficient, the seemingly endless possibilities should not cause us to lose sight of the related concerns and hazards that have arisen due to the widespread use of ICT. Teachers need to be well informed and cautious about both their own use of ICT as well as the potential negative impact of inappropriate use of this technology by students.

In its draft policy on Cyberconduct and Cyberbullying, the Canadian Teachers' Federation defines ICT as: *Equipment that includes, but is not limited to, any current or emerging stationary or wireless technologies or systems that can be used by individuals or groups for the purpose of communication, entertainment, data management, word processing, internet access, image capture/recording, sound recording and information transmitting/receiving/storing.*

The broad range of devices and technology captured by this definition clearly illustrates the wide scope of potential issues and concerns for teachers. Some of the reasons the NLTA feels there is a need for caution and concern are:

- lack of privacy or security;
- websites that malign teachers;
- increase in incidents of cyberbullying;
- forged or altered e-mail messages;
- anonymous messages and Internet postings;
- messages, photos, videos, etc. posted or distributed without permission; and,
- on-line access to personal information.

While computers and related technology have had certain positive effects on teachers' work lives, growing reliance on and expectations regarding the professional use of ICT also raise workload related issues. On-line listings of school and district staff e-mail addresses, homework sites, etc. have opened up new lines of communication for the entire school community. In some ways, this has been a positive development. However, teachers must be cautious that expectations not become unreasonable. Ongoing communication at all hours to and from parents, students and district officials is not acceptable and teachers need to set reasonable limits in this regard.

Also, teachers need to be conscious of the risks inherent in any use of ICT, either at school or at home. It is always important for teachers to remember that off-duty conduct can have employment consequences if it has a negative impact in the professional context. As professionals, teachers are expected to model ethical and appropriate use of ICT. Teachers hold a position of trust with students and can be held accountable, including through disciplinary action, if any of their actions expose students to inappropriate material or communications. Creating or participating in blogs, chat rooms or other on-line platforms can be risky, especially when personal and intimate information is posted. This is an even greater concern when teachers are using school equipment. As CTF warns in its publication, "Cybertips for Teachers", it is crucial to remember that: *School Boards own the computers and Internet connection in schools.*

Nothing is private when you use digital communication. When you are using Board equipment and communication links, the Board can access all your messages and on-line sites visited if any of this communication went through Board servers or has been accessed using Board equipment.

As well, informal or casual language in communications may be viewed as unprofessional, and e-mails, web-postings, on-line exchanges, etc. can be saved and printed, resulting in a permanent written record of teachers' conduct.

In light of the above referenced concerns and risks, some general advice and principles that should guide teachers' electronic communications and on-line conduct are:

- Always maintain a professional demeanor in electronic communications with students, parents, colleagues and administrators. Use Canadian grammar and spelling checks as well as a signature that includes your name, assignment/title and school name;
- Do not write messages in all CAPITAL letters – this is interpreted as shouting;
- Keep a printed copy of all work-related e-mail messages;
- Avoid engaging in lengthy, detailed e-mail exchanges. This increases workload, and protracted written exchanges may be prone to misinterpretation. Respond to complex messages from parents by telephone or in a face-to-face meeting;
- Do not use your personal/home computer or e-mail account for work related contact with students or parents;
- Do not e-mail or engage in other forms of electronic communication with students for personal reasons. Maintain appropriate professional boundaries;
- Be extremely cautious of posting, or allowing others to post, your personal information and images on-line, participating in blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites, etc. You can never be certain of who may gain access to this information. Also, all posted material becomes the property of the platform providers (Facebook, etc.), even if it is later deleted;
- Never leave your computer unattended if it is logged into the school district server;
- Protect your user name and password from identity theft in order to prevent unauthorized e-mail under your name or access to school documents and other confidential information;
- Be aware of and comply with your school and district acceptable use policies;
- Never share confidential information or criticize students, parents, colleagues, administrators or your employer in e-mails or on-line postings. This information could be accessed by or forwarded to others without your knowledge or consent.

Cyberbullying

Unfortunately, social cruelty among young people is growing in the form of cyberbullying. In its draft policy, CTF defines cyberbullying (and cybermisconduct) as: *the use of information and communication technology to bully, embarrass, threaten or harass another. It also includes the use of information and communication technology to engage in conduct or behaviour that is derogatory, defamatory, degrading, illegal, and/or abusive.*

Teachers are sometimes the targets of cyberbullying. It is important that school boards and teachers take an active role in educating and informing students and parents about acceptable cyberconduct, as well as responding appropriately to incidents of cyberbullying against students and teachers. If a teacher is a victim of cybermisconduct/cyberbullying by a student, the following advice should be followed:

- make hard copies of all messages and exchanges and/or capture all posted comments, pictures, videos, etc.;
- immediately demand that the student stop the inappropriate conduct, stating that the behaviour is unacceptable;
- use block sender technology to prevent continuing e-mail communications;
- contact the student's parents;
- if the situation requires immediate action and/or the inappropriate conduct continues, advise and involve your school administrators;
- contact the NLTA if the actions taken to address the situation are ineffective and/or if you need further support or advice.

Some forms of cyberbullying may be considered criminal acts. If there is a question as to whether this is the case, or if you feel your personal safety is at risk, you should contact the police. In such circumstances, it may also be necessary to contact the Internet Service Provider(s) (ISPs) to have the offending material deleted from temporary/permanent sites and archives.

For additional information, the Media Awareness Network (www.media-awareness.ca) offers useful information and resources on safe and appropriate cyberconduct for teachers and students. As well, www.cyberbullying.ca is a great resource for teachers, parents and students.

The information and advice contained in this article is also available as an Infosheet from the Benefits and Economic Services Division and can be accessed at www.nlta.nl.ca through the "Publications" directory. The CTF publication "Cybertips for Teachers" is also available on-line at www.ctf-fce.ca in both French and English versions and printed copies are available from the NLTA.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Taking Educational Leave to Upgrade Skills

A Win-Win Situation

by BILL BURSEY

I have a message for teachers who are giving every ounce of energy to their profession, students, school and family. You can only be pulled in so many directions for so long, with staff meetings, parent-teacher meetings, committee meetings, sports teams, school dances, and the list goes on and on.

Is it not time you did something just for you? Something that can revitalize your job, your career, and your life. That something is professional development. It is time to get back to the place where it all began – back to university. This could mean upgrading your teaching skills for interest sake or going back to do a full time Masters Degree in your discipline. The benefits are enormous.

"It has been a perfect time for me to go back to university and reflect on what I've been doing. This experience has provided me with time to read and learn new methods and ways of doing what I love to do – that is teaching."

I was someone who was on the fence for years. I couldn't make up my mind. Many times I tried to decide will I or won't I and then before long the deadline had passed and the decision was made for me. In the fall of 2007 I finally took the gamble. I started my Masters in Education. It is a little intimidating to be the oldest one in my classes but I am glad I made the decision.

I am able to use the experiences I've had as a teacher for the past eighteen years to offer insight into my course work and discussions. It has been a perfect time for me to go back to university and reflect on what I've been doing. This experience has provided me with time to read and learn new methods and ways of doing what I love to do - that is teaching.

The university staff and fellow students are truly amazing. They can't do enough to help and every individual I've met is success oriented and driven. In this environment it is very easy to get caught up in the energy you feel by returning to university. It's a place of renewal and a place to re-energize yourself. I now see my career from a totally different perspective and recommend educational leave as something well worth considering.

Teachers are able to access paid educational leave at 80% of salary. Things such as whether you have received paid leave in the past, number of years taught, current teaching certificate level and whether leave will lead to certificate upgrade are all taken into consideration. All these criteria are weighed along with other personal circumstances to determine your eligibility. Your pension is also a consideration since time as a full time student is considered as pensionable time. You are given nine months to pay your portion of the pension.

What do you have to lose? In my opinion, taking educational leave to upgrade your skills is a win-win situation. You get all the benefits of renewing your career as well as a pay increase. Your employer wins by getting a more satisfied, qualified teacher or administrator. My suggestion is to JUST DO IT!

Note: The applications for Educational Leave and important deadline information can be found on the NLTA website. Go to www.nlta.nl.ca, then click the link "Forms Online" on the left-hand side of the page, then Educational Leave Application.

Bill Bursey is currently on educational leave from his teaching position at Frank Roberts Junior High in Foxtrap.

Media Studies in Newfoundland and Labrador?

by ALEX HICKEY & LESLIE KENNEDY

"Media Literacy is a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy." – Center for Media Literacy, 2007

Do you know that there is an Association for Media Literacy for Newfoundland and Labrador (AMLNL)? It's been around since June 2002. If you haven't heard of it until now, keep your eye on the media horizon; it's coming your way! The AMLNL has formed a steering committee to energize and direct its future. This will involve creating a new web site and engaging in a conversation about how to support teachers in their efforts to teach media studies and enhance skills in media literacy in our schools.

The AMLNL will be lobbying for more professional development and appropriate instructional resources in this important curriculum area. Linking teachers across the province is the first priority, which will be done through the web site and the use of advanced technologies such as videoconferencing. There are many ways to approach media education. One way is to expand our traditional notions of what constitutes literacy. We must broaden our definitions and focus on such things as critical thinking and social justice – and fun! Media plays a huge role in the development of identity and social relationships as well as playing a major role in our leisure time.

If you would like to become part of the AMLNL or if you are looking for support in media literacy, we invite you to contact us. We also would like to hear from anyone who has done some work in this area and might like to share their experience and expertise. Our web site will soon be up and running and it will contain a message board as well as links to teaching resources. We'd like to highlight some of the media literacy projects you are involved in wherever you are. We look forward to hearing from you and sharing what we know! It is the hope of the AMLNL that it will provide the connection and support we all need to help our students with the skills and knowledge they need to be literate in the twenty-first century!

Contact Leslie Kennedy (lesliekennedy6525@yahoo.com) for more information and look for a new web site on the Virtual Teacher Centre in the very near future.

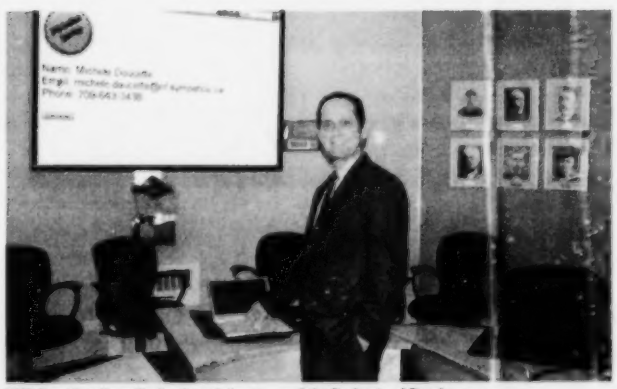
Alex Hickey

Leslie Kennedy

Alex Hickey is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre; Leslie Kennedy is a Language Arts/Media Studies teacher at Holy Heart High School in St. John's.

Professional Development Survey Winner Announced

Michelle Doucette, a teacher at St. Michael's Elementary School in Stephenville Crossing, is the winner of a DELL Laptop Computer for having completed an online Professional Development Survey at the Virtual Teacher Centre. The draw took place on January 21, 2008 through computer generated random draw by Sean Noah, President of the NLTA. Congratulations Michelle! Thanks to all who participated.



NLTA President Sean Noah selected the winner of the Professional Development survey.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRACTICAL STUDY OF LAW IN EDUCATION (CAPSLE) ANNUAL CONFERENCE

April 20-22, 2008

Halifax, NS. Theme: *Educational Leadership Today and Tomorrow: The Law as Friend or Foe*. Further information: www.capsle.ca.

ARTS WORK III CONFERENCE

April 24-25, 2008

Gander. For further information contact Krista Vokey, kvokey@gov.nl.ca.

SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONFERENCE

May 12-14, 2008

Holiday Inn, St. John's. The official speaking line-up for the first provincial conference on sexual and reproductive health has been announced. Over 20 speakers presenting on topics relevant to our provincial health care professionals – an excellent personal and professional development conference for nurses, physicians, social workers, pyschologists, teachers and administrators. Topics of note include the Internet and sex, deviance and sexual health, fertility treatment, sexual exploitation, maternity needs of immigrant women and much more. For further information contact karen.m@Nlsexualhealthcentre.org or call 709.579.1009 for additional conference information.

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008

May 14-16, 2008

Delta Conference Centre, St. John's. Featuring speakers Dr. Avis Glaze: *Leadership Imperatives for Canadian School Administrators*; Barry MacDonald: *Mentoring Boys for Success at School*; Gwynne Dyer: *Changing Canadian Demographics and the Implications for Educational Leaders*; Alfie Kohn: *Testing and Grading and Homework – But Why? Rethinking Traditional Practices in Education*. A host of educators from our own province will offer a variety of interesting and informative concurrent sessions. For further information visit the conference website at www.cap2008.ca.

EINSTEIN PLUS TEACHER'S WORKSHOP ON MODERN PHYSICS

July 2008

Waterloo, ON. This popular summer science workshop for teachers is being offered in two sessions (July 2-8 and July 10-16), and is open to international teachers. A total of 80 teachers (40 each per week-long session) will enjoy a unique opportunity to explore cutting edge ideas in modern physics with scientists at Perimeter Institute, learn new and innovative teaching strategies to take back home and share with other educators, and enjoy social events with dynamic teachers from across the world who share the same passion for physics. Deadline for applications is April 15, 2008. For information visit www.einsteinplus.ca or contact Julie Taylor at jtaylor@perimeterinstitute.ca.

NUTRITION INSTITUTE

July 7-9, 2008

Corner Brook. Hosted by the Department of Education. The focus of the three-day institute is on skill development for teachers who work in a food laboratory environment. Priority will be given to teachers of Nutrition 2102/3102. Expressions of interest should be directed to ellencoady@gov.nl.ca.

ATLANTIC CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE EDUCATORS (ACASE) AGM AND CONFERENCE

July 10-12, 2008

St. Mary's University, Halifax. Theme: *Science Engages "Energy"!* For further information go to www.acase.ca or contact Craig White, craigwhite@gov.nl.ca, Tel: 709-729-2614.

Dates to Remember

March 2008

Mar 30 Deadline: Professional Development Fund applications

Mar 31 Board Deadline: Notice for retirement at end of school year

Mar 31 Deadline: Centennial Study Award Applications

Mar 31 Deadline: For all before March 31st, International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2008

Apr 1 Deadline: Johnson Bursary Applications

Apr 3 NLTA Executive Meeting

Apr 4-5 Joint Council Meeting

Apr 15 Deadline: Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP

Apr 30 Deadline: Deferred Salary Leave Applications

Apr 30 Deadline: Year-end resignation from contract

May 2008

May 7 Deadline: Notification by Board of DSLP

May 11-17 Branch Election Week

May 15 Deadline: Professional Development Fund applications

June 2008

June 6-7 NLTA Executive Meeting

June 15 Deadline: Notification by Board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests

June 19 Deadline: Professional Development Fund applications

July 2008

July 31 Deadline: NLTA Scholarship Applications